

USSTRATCOM

A Command for the 21st Century

B-2 refueling from KC-135

U.S. Air Force (Val Gempis)

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By JAMES E. CARTWRIGHT

Addressing today's threats and security challenges and supporting deployed forces and allies require new approaches to integrate and synchronize action, empower subordinates, and increase operational speed. Willingness to change is no longer optional as U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) rethinks its approach to the challenges it faces.

Redefining Global Deterrence

Marshall McLuhan said, "There is absolutely no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening."¹ For the Department of Defense,

what is happening today requires us to adapt to confront a broad spectrum of threats from near-peer nation-states to small bands of radical extremists bent on inflicting catastrophic damage.

The changing global environment is illustrated in Thomas Friedman's *The World Is Flat*.² Friedman writes, for example, about big companies learning to flourish in the flat world by learning how to "act really small by enabling their customers to act really big." Referring to Starbucks Coffee, Friedman notes that 19,000 varieties of coffee can be made on the basis of menus posted at any Starbucks. To serve each customer would be not only impossible but also expensive, so the company

created a platform that allows individuals to serve themselves "in their own way, at their own pace, in their own time, according to their own tastes."

To redefine global deterrence and confront today's threats, USSTRATCOM is similarly adapting by moving from a single integrated operating plan to an integrated portfolio of capabilities. The command supports its customers—geographic combatant commanders—through a collaborative, interdependent structure supporting real-time crisis action planning to develop tailored options against today's myriad threats.

The 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review* (QDR) recognizes that the United States is engaged in a long war and that its enemies

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USSTRATCOM supports combatant commanders through real-time crisis action planning to develop tailored options

seek weapons of mass destruction and will likely attempt to use them against America and other nations. The QDR also recognizes the need to adjust the U.S. global military force posture by moving away from a static defense in obsolete Cold War garrisons. To support the QDR, U.S. Strategic Command is shifting its approach from:

- a focus on nation-state threats to decentralized networked threats from nonstate enemies
- “one size fits all” deterrence to regionally tailored deterrence
- a focus on kinetics to a focus on effects
- 20th-century individual processes to 21st-century network-enabled approaches
- vertical structures and processes to more adaptive horizontal integration.

Historically, the United States has achieved superiority on land, at sea, in the air, in space, and now in cyberspace, and the American people will not tolerate the loss of that superiority. National security also involves the military’s partners, who work in the realm of diplomacy and international relations, the private sector, and academia. USSTRATCOM is accomplishing its global role by embracing the new QDR and reconsidering basic military concepts, the construct that supports those concepts, and the capabilities required—both kinetic and nonkinetic.

A New Strategic Command

Meeting new challenges and redefining national defense includes a constant process of rethinking global deterrence and America’s global capabilities. No nation, including the United States, can afford to put large numbers of forces on every border of every adversary. Consequently, there is great value in the ability to reach the other side of the earth quickly to offset the requirement of placing large formations in those places where we face an evolving range of adversaries.

To meet new challenges, the President and Secretary of Defense have ordered the rebuilding of U.S. Strategic Command. After listening to a recent briefing on command missions, one visitor said that General Curtis

LeMay had clearly left the building. Others have speculated on how fast General LeMay is spinning in his grave as he sees what has become of his old Strategic Air Command.

Those working in Omaha have a different view. If Curtis LeMay were to visit USSTRATCOM today he would ask, “What took you so long?” The general was an innovator who clearly understood the need to fight today’s enemy, prepare for tomorrow’s enemy, and relegate yesterday’s enemy to the

General James E. Cartwright, USMC, Commander, U.S. Strategic Command, talking with the commander of Space Forces of the Russian Federation



history books. While some may see the old Strategic Air Command as the end result of a process, it is clear that General LeMay viewed it as one step in an evolving world of military strategy, capability, and threat.

The Strategic Air Command was built to counter the monolithic Soviet threat. As the world changed during the immediate post-Cold War period, the first Strategic Command stood up to replace the Strategic Air Command but remained primarily focused on the former’s legacy nuclear deterrence mission. After the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001, a new U.S. Strategic Command was established. In addition to legacy nuclear responsibilities, it was assigned seven distinct global missions for deterring the full range of threats the Nation faces today:

- Space Operations
- Information Operations
- Integrated Missile Defense
- Global Command and Control
- Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
- Space and Global Strike
- Strategic Deterrence.

In January 2005, the Secretary of Defense assigned USSTRATCOM as the lead combatant command for integration and synchronization of DOD-wide efforts in combating weapons of mass destruction.

To make these missions operational requires leveraging existing assets to bring

resources and expertise to bear more quickly. That is why day-to-day planning and execution for the primary mission areas is done by joint functional component commands (JFCCs). The JFCC concept is simply an evolution of the joint force operating structure in use since the war in Vietnam, achieving unity of effort from land, maritime, and air forces.

JFCCs are composed of U.S. Strategic Command planners and operators taken from the headquarters staff and matched with centers of excellence for their complementary expertise and authorities. The result is a USSTRATCOM functional component commander who is dual-hatted as the head of the complementary agency.

Joint functional component commands leverage the expertise and

operational capabilities in existing organizations to support all combatant commands with the equivalent of one-stop shopping for the effects required. Comparing USSTRATCOM to an orchestra, the headquarters acts as the conductor while JFCCs represent the string, brass, woodwind, and percussion sections. When combatant commanders come to the conductor or to any section, they access the entire symphony. USSTRATCOM not only will act much like an internet search engine but also will enable warfighters to leverage military authorities and make maximum use of all existing resources against an emerging threat. They open the door to the American arsenal—everything from influence on the low end to kinetic effects on the high end. Each JFCC brings unique capabilities to this evolving construct and the concept it supports.

Space Operations. With the merger of the former U.S. Strategic Command with U.S. Space Command in 2002, the new Strategic Command also directs the deliberate planning and execution of assigned space operations missions. A new Joint Space Operations Center (JSpOC) has been stood up, led by the same two-star general who commands 14th Air Force—the largest part of the USSTRATCOM space arm. Establishment of the Joint Space Operations Center and designation of a commander, Joint Space Operations, brings a truly joint perspective and capability to the space operations world. The JSpOC cuts across boundaries to direct all elements of DOD space capabilities, from daily space operations through space support to the regional combatant commands.

Information Operations. JFCC–Network Warfare facilitates cooperative engagement with other national entities in computer network defense and offensive information warfare as part of global information

operations. It is collocated with the National Security Agency, and its commander is dual-hatted as the director of the agency.

In a related change, Joint Task Force Global Network Operations is collocated with the Defense Information Systems Agency, and the commander is dual-hatted as the agency's director. Integrating computer offense and defense has become necessary because the Global Information Grid is now essential to national security, reaching across every element of national power and channeling it for use by every commander from the farthest corner of the earth to the Rose Garden at the White House.

Cyber threats to computer networks are as real and significant as physical threats. Advanced computers, sophisticated software programs, and information technology are widespread and easily available.

Targets for attacks could include military, government, and commercial systems, all of which could pose a threat to security and economic prosperity. For USSTRATCOM, cyberspace is the place where a nonkinetic

SM-3 missile is launched during Missile Defense Agency and Japan Defense Agency cooperative flight test mission in the Pacific



U.S. Navy

and global partners to combat cybercrime and cyberterrorism. These agreements will facilitate extradition, develop a common definition for cyber offenses, and allow nations to assist each other with the enactment of laws that protect everyone.

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use of force can occur. The mainstream media have reported on terrorists using the Internet to recruit forces, raise funds, and spread false information. This terrorist use of the Internet to incite violence translates to physical threats against the United States and coalition forces.

The Armed Forces have developed capabilities to defend vital information infrastructure. America is globally linked today—socially, economically, and militarily—so efforts must continue to develop agreements, cooperative measures,

Integrated Missile Defense. JFCC–Integrated Missile Defense (IMD) is headquartered in Colorado Springs to take advantage of missile defense activities located there. The commander is dual-hatted as the commander of Army Space and Missile Defense Command. While the Missile Defense Agency is assigned to develop missile defense systems, JFCC–IMD offers the warfighter's focus to IMD development. Its responsibility is to make the system operationally responsive by planning, integrating, and coordinating

36th Communications Squadron (Bennie J. Davis III)

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B-1B, B-2, and B-52 bombers at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam



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Briefing the commander of USSTRATCOM and the commander of Space Forces of the Russian Federation on the mission of the 14th Air Force

1st Combat Camera Squadron (Ken Bergmann)

global missile defense operations and support (land, sea, air, and space-based).

Global Command and Control. As the addition of newly assigned missions realigns responsibilities and authorities, decentralizes operational execution, and increases operational speed, the nature and role of command headquarters has changed to focus on command and control across mission areas and advocate capabilities needed to ensure

national security. The nuclear deterrence mission remains a vital priority, and the commander of USSTRATCOM

retains control of the nuclear deterrence task forces. The command has not wavered in its commitment to a strong, secure, and ready nuclear deterrent force.

The military conceptual structure called “The New Triad” has as its three points offensive capabilities, defensive capabilities, and the infrastructure necessary to supply the national arsenal with a precise and effective response to any threat. To produce effects within this triad, USSTRATCOM is rebuilding and

restructuring the national command and control apparatus through a new system of geographically separated, interdependent command and control operation centers, meeting the imperative to pursue high capacity, Internet-like capability. It creates a reliable command and control network as it extends the Global Information Grid to deployed and mobile users worldwide. This is vital to maintaining our traditional

since terrorists do not distinguish between America’s civilian and military establishments, the Nation must look at both military and civilian vulnerabilities

global deterrence, as we move all mission operations at the speed of light through high-capacity, virtual collaborative networks.

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance. JFCC–ISR plans, integrates, and coordinates intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) in support of strategic and global operations and strategic deterrence. That includes coordinating ISR capabilities in support of global strike, missile defense, and associated planning. JFCC–ISR is collocated with the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the

commander of JFCC–ISR is dual-hatted as the agency director.

Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance provide distinct nonkinetic deterrent effects. William E. Burrows has written extensively about the cause, effect, and legacy of reconnaissance and explains how space imagery can reduce genocide and other atrocities. This reduction comes when those who want to commit vile acts know

that their deeds may be recorded by machines they cannot see but which can see them. Burrows contends, “The more such machines there are, the

more difficult it will be to conceal foul play from public scrutiny.”³

Today’s security environment requires coordinating all intelligence collection capabilities. The information collected must then be made available to a wide range of customers based on a secured “need to share” basis rather than the old “need to know” threshold.

Space and Global Strike. JFCC–Space and Global Strike (SGS) is responsible for integrating planning and command and control support for the rapid delivery of extended

range, precision effects in support of theater or national objectives. SGS mission responsibilities now require the capacity to reach rapidly and accurately *any* adversary with kinetic or nonkinetic effects. JFCC–SGS is led by the same three-star general who commands 8th Air Force, which is a large part of the USSTRATCOM “global strike” arm. SGS plans global strike activities and serves as lead integrator of joint effects across the range of USSTRATCOM capabilities. It also runs the Global Operations Center and serves as the commander’s eyes and ears for situational awareness.

Strategic Deterrence. When USSTRATCOM was assigned to integrate and synchronize DOD efforts to combat weapons of mass destruction in 2005, it looked to the Defense Threat Reduction Agency as a partner to form the Strategic Center for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction (SCC–WMD). The center is modeled on the other JFCCs but headed by a civilian director (in this case, dual-hatted as the agency director). The first priority is rapidly advocating development and implementation of capabilities to support interdicting and eliminating WMD and its related materials. Since terrorists do not distinguish between America’s civilian and military establishments, the Nation must look at both military and civilian targets and vulnerabilities. SCC–WMD will share information, assess vulnerabilities, and develop deterrent, detection, and response capabilities. A team effort will be needed to meet challenges as complicated as international treaty interpretation and as basic as the safety of the Nation’s food supply.

Retaining existing advantages in space and an edge in USSTRATCOM’s other mission areas also requires advocating a more agile, safe, and responsive arsenal. Moreover, a strong industrial base is necessary to retain the technological capability demanded in the new security environment.

Today’s conventional kinetic arsenal has carved a tremendous advantage for America in recent years by achieving unprecedented accuracy. During previous conflicts, it took multiple aircraft to destroy a single target. Today, one plane can hit multiple targets with precision weapons. A mission can be accomplished with a perfectly placed conventional bomb instead of an entire air strike by multiple aircraft.

Everyone—particularly adversaries—knows nuclear weapons are the deterrent of last resort, which is why it is not enough

simply to maintain a credible nuclear arsenal. New options that do not cross the nuclear threshold are required. America’s defense has relied on the intercontinental ballistic missile, both land- and sea-based, equipped with nuclear warheads that can make them less credible as a deterrent.

For credible deterrence, an adversary must believe a weapon will be used if the Nation is put at risk. Combining the range and speed of a ballistic missile with the enhanced accuracy of space-based GPS and a conventional warhead would mark a great stride toward improving deterrent capabilities. Rapidly placing the right effect precisely on target truly changes the dynamics of deterrence.

Culture Change

Changes in concept, construct, and capability will be successful only if military and government professionals can adapt to culture change. This will be more controversial than any other effort. Everyone claims to understand the need for change until the effect becomes personal.

For centuries, the military has been dealing with the command and control structure used by Napoleon. While it is a great system for refining information, it takes too long. If commanders wait for perfect information today, their responses could be irrelevant. Information must move at the speed of light, and USSTRATCOM has taken initial steps to create a system that invites participation based on value added, not rank held.

When the command first established its Strategic Knowledge Integration–Web network, contributing bloggers wore eagles and stars and entered the same information electronically only after it ran through the old time-consuming staffing procedure. However, continued encouragement has begun to yield useful, real-time messages—many from talented 19-year-olds who have been electronically sharing information all their lives.

How the efforts of U.S. Strategic Command will evolve remains a question, but there is no doubt that it must evolve. Future success will depend on breaking old molds, redefining old systems, and expanding available knowledge across the entire national security infrastructure to explore the full range of options needed to achieve reach, speed, and precision—both nuclear and conventional, kinetic and nonkinetic. **JFQ**

NOTES

¹ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1968).

² Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the 21st Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

³ William E. Burrows, “Imaging Space Reconnaissance Operations During the Cold War: Cause, Effect, and Legacy,” 1997, available at <http://webster.hibo.no/asf/Cold_War/report1/williams.html>.

Sea-based X-Band Radar departing Hawaii to Alaska for advanced ballistic missile detection



U.S. Navy (John T. Jackson)